

## Splitting Subject and Verb I

By using a word or phrase to split the subject and verb of a sentence, you can add descriptive detail or build suspense for the reader. Some common ways and examples of splitting the subject and the verb are listed below.

- **Add adjectives.**

The town barber, *quiet and dignified*, was waiting for the next customer.

- **Add a prepositional phrase.**

The hotel attendant, *with one swift motion*, hoisted five bags of luggage.

- **Add an appositive or appositive phrase.**

Dr. Tompkins, *the speaker for the evening*, thanked the audience for their questions.

- **Add a participle or participial phrase.**

The panther at the zoo, *pacing back and forth in its cage*, seemed ready to pounce.

The Empire State Building, *completed in 1931*, was once the tallest building on Earth.

**EXERCISE** Each item below begins with a sentence model taken from literature. Unscramble the jumbled phrases that follow to create a new sentence that matches the structure of the literature model. Add commas to the beginning and end of each phrase splitting a subject and verb.

**Sample** Mr. DePalma, to our complete shock, was crying.

Judith Ortiz Cofer, "American History"

- laughed at every joke in the movie
- in the seat beside him
- his daughter

**Revision** His daughter, in the seat beside him, laughed at every joke in the movie.

1. That summer, the summer of 1918, was blighted.

James Hurst, "The Scarlet Ibis"

- a tenant on the fifth floor
- plays the piano every night
- one tenant

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2. The shopman, in some dim cavern of his mind, may have dared to think so too.

Katherine Mansfield, "A Cup of Tea"

- was closing in on a world record
- the Olympic swimmer
- with every stroke and every kick

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## Revising with Style

### LESSON

10  
Continued

3. The scientific weeds, seen from close up, looked straggly and gnarled.

- tasted better than she remembered
- baked entirely from scratch
- her grandmother's pie

Anne Tyler, "With All Flags Flying"

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4. The forests, somber and dull, stood motionless and silent on each side of the broad stream.

- the basketball fans
- packed into the arena to cheer on their team
- loud and lively

Joseph Conrad, "The Lagoon"

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5. Her other arm, swinging loose, was very white in the sun.

- meeting in secret
- a group of Hollywood actors
- formed the Screen Actors Guild in 1933

Doris Lessing, "Through the Tunnel"

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6. The former tenant of our house, a priest, had died in the back drawing room.

- was virtually eradicated through vaccinations
- a deadly virus
- smallpox

James Joyce, "Araby"

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7. The Monster, at the first motion, lunged forward with a terrible scream.

- in less than ten minutes
- had flooded the entire street
- the broken water main

Ray Bradbury, "A Sound of Thunder"

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**Revising with Style****LESSON****10**  
Continued

8. The liquid avalanche, known as a lahar, was soon hurtling down the steep slopes at speeds of up to 30 m.p.h.

George Russell, "Colombia's Mortal Agony"

- paralyzed in his legs since the age of four
  - Itzhak Perlman
  - is considered to be one of the world's premier violinists
- 
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9. E. J. Kenney, the marshal dispatched to arrest Susan B. Anthony, was not at all happy with his assignment.

Margaret Truman, "The United States vs. Susan B. Anthony"

- John Logie Baird
  - was the first person to televise moving objects
  - a pioneer in television technology
- 
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10. The piano, having gone away to be stored, had left what looked like claw marks on its part of the parquet.

Elizabeth Bowen, "The Demon Lover"

- was still perplexed
  - the detective
  - having rummaged the crime scene for clues
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